



NORTH EAST  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY

## MEDIA RELEASE

26 July 2006

### Collect green timber now for a warm fire next winter

Now is the ideal time for people to start collecting green firewood to burn next winter.

That's the key message from agencies and community groups involved in the North East Firewood Strategy.

"Next Winter may seem a long way away, but we're encouraging people to plan ahead, collect their firewood green and then store it under cover for the next season. Green wood is far easier to obtain and not so hard on chainsaws", explained Greta Quinlivan from the North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

The Firewood Strategy was developed in 2005 in response to changes in public land management in North East Victoria and environmental pressures. It aims to ensure the North East has an accessible, sustainable and affordable supply of firewood to meet community needs, without compromising the natural environment.

Firewood has traditionally been collected from public reserves, roadside areas and local farms. The creation of new National Parks and restrictions on firewood collection from public land has impacted on these practices, particularly in the Wangaratta, Beechworth, and Chiltern areas.

According to Greta Quinlivan, the reliance on a few woodland species for timber is unsustainable and destroying habitat for a large range of wildlife.

"There are many ways that people can relieve pressure on the environment, such as supplementing their firewood supplies with suitable offcuts or waste timber from industry or sourcing plantation grown firewood", said Greta.

"Modern wood fires are a lot more efficient than open fire places and will efficiently generate heat from a mix of timber species. Burning dry wood ensures less pollution and a warmer, more efficient fire."

The North East Firewood Strategy is supported by; a community reference group, the Department of Sustainability & Environment, the Department of Primary Industries, Indigo Shire, Rural City of Wangaratta, and the North East CMA.

The Strategy partners have developed a range of new resources, including;

- ❑ Community Firewood Depots operating at Eldorado, Chiltern, Beechworth and Yackandandah. These Depots supply local communities in firewood shortfall areas with timber from Council clean-up or safety operations and from storm damage. Indigo Shire, the Rural City of Wangaratta and DSE are working cooperatively to establish and operate these depots.
- ❑ A list of companies who have timber off-cuts that are suitable for firewood is published on the Indigo Shire and Rural City of Wangaratta websites.
- ❑ The Department of Primary Industries will establish 560 hectares of Firewood Plantations by December 2006;

The Yackandandah Community Firewood Depot has a stockpile of storm-damaged timber ready to be collected for burning next year.

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People who are interested in this wood simply need to buy one cubic metre firewood collection permits from the Yackandandah Newsagency (for up to two cubic metres a time) or any DSE office (for more than two cubic metres).

“ Once you have a permit, you simply drive in, cut and load your wood, then drive out, happy that you will be warm next Winter !”, concluded Greta.

Households in North East Victoria consume about 40,000 tonnes of firewood each year and research indicates that this level of demand is likely to continue in the future.

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**Suggested photo/vision opportunity:**

Yackandandah Community Firewood Depot has a stockpile of storm damaged timber ready to be collected this year for next season’s burning.

For further information or to arrange an interview/photograph please contact:

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